Services to be provided with such coaches during April to December'97 has not yet been finalised.

(b) Bed rolls to the passengers are supplied in AC 3 tier coaches of the trains other than Rajdhani Express trains on demand on payment of prescribed charges. These are supplied free of charge to the passengers in AC 3 tier coaches Rajdhani Express trains because of a separate fare structure. Adequate catering arrangements are provided for long distance travellers through static and mobile units.

Ring Railway Service in Delhi

2186. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO:
SHRI TARIQ ANWAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have introduced of Ring Railway Service in Delhi.

(b) if so, the additional tracks proposed to be constructed along the main corridors to make the existing network viable;

(c) whether the Government propose to take up any project of Ring Railway Service before the proposed Mass Rapid Transit System; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) Ring Railway system was originally planned as Goods avoiding lines to avoid Goods Trains being brought into busy and congested yards of Delhi/New Delhi. They were not planned to carry commuters. During Asiad the passenger services were run to enable people from outside Delhi to travel on the Ring Railway. Presently the number of Goods train running on these lines is quite high and the scope for running additional passenger trains on this route is limited.

In the meeting of National Capital Region/Planning Board held on 24.9.96. It was decided that the feasibility study for laying two additional tracks alongside the Ring Railway in Delhi shall be conducted by Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi in Co-ordination with National Capital Region/Planning Board.

Indian Institute of Mass Communication

2187. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the branches of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication State-wise, and location wise;

(b) whether the Government propose to open more branches of the above Institute in various States;

(c) if so, the details thereof location-wise; and

(d) the time by which these are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) The branches of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication are:

Name of the State	Location
(1) Orissa	Dhenkanal
(2) Kerala	Kottayam
(3) Madhya Pradesh	Jhabua
(4) Nagaland	Dimapur

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Flights to Singapore

2188. SHRI T. GOPAL KRISHNA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether more flights are proposed to be operated to Singapore;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether flights to Singapore are also proposed to be introduced from Hyderabad in view of public demand; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) Indian Airlines is planning to introduce a thrice weekly flight each from Bangalore and Calcutta to Singapore and a once weekly flight from Madras to Singapore in the Summer Schedule, 1997.

(c) and (d) Air India and Indian Airlines have no plans at present to introduce a service from Hyderabad to Singapore.

Telecom Regulatory Authority in India

2189. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO:
SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have set up a Telecom Regulatory Authority;

(b) if so, the main objectives therefor alongwith the powers and freedom thereof;

(c) the date from which the authority is likely to start its functions; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes Sir, The Telecom Regulatory

Authority of India has been set up w.e.f. 20.2.1997.

(b) The main objectives of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India is to provide a level playing field for fair competition and engender further confidence in investors, both Indian and foreign, for healthy growth of Telecom Sector in the country.

The Authority has been entrusted with, inter-alia, the following powers;

(i) to seek information on various aspects of service providers' activities;

(ii) to investigate, any matter, in-relation to affairs of any service provider;

(iii) to inspect books and records of service provider;

(iv) to make regulations, consistent with the Ordinance and rules made thereunder to carryout the purposes of the Ordinance.

The Authority may levy fees and other charges at such rates and in respect of such services as may be determined by regulation.

(v) The Authority while discharging its functions may issue direction from time to time to the service providers, as it may consider necessary.

(c) and (d) The Authority will start functioning in the month of March, 1997 and the Central Government have already notified the appointments for the posts of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and a Member on 20.2.1997.

Directions to Mining Sector

2190. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:
KUMARI UMABHARATI:
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have issued new directions to mining Sector:

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the new directions are likely to come into force; and

(d) the extent to which the foreign Investment is likely to be enhanced as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (d) The Central Government in October, 1996 have issued guidelines for grant of large areas for Prospecting Licences. As per these guidelines, an applicant can be granted upto a maximum of 10,000 Sq. Kms. for the whole country for the purposes of aerial Prospecting. The applications of the said grant have to be submitted to the State Governments only. The Central Government would consider the request after the State Governments recommend the applications to the Central Government. The guidelines have inbuilt scheme of steep relinquishment so that the area left with an applicant for detailed Prospecting at the end of three years is only 25 Sq.kms., specific expenditure commitments on the part of the applicant and aerial prospecting.

With a view to facilitate foreign direct investment in the mineral sector the Government has recently allowed (in January '97) automatic route for foreign equity participation upto 50% in case of mining of iron ore, manganese ore, chromite, bauxite, copper lead and zinc ores besides mining of certain non-metallic minerals. Further, the Government has also allowed automatic approval route for foreign equity participation upto 74% for services incidental to mining viz. drilling, shaft sinking, reclamation of mines, surveys/mapping excluding services related to gold, silver and precious/semi-precious stones. Higher equity participation can be considered on case to case basis through the FIPB route as per the policy prescription under New Mineral Policy, 1993. The above decisions of the Government are likely to accelerate foreign direct investments in the mineral sector.

Ministers Entitlement of Special Train

2191. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT:
SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ:
SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of Railways is entitled to avail of the facility of special train in case he reaches the station late when going to his home town or on private tour; and

(b) if so, the details regarding the rules and regulations meant for the Railway Ministers (Cabinet as well as State Ministers) alongwith the procedure followed in this regard while the Minister of Railways is on official tour or private tour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) As per extant rules, Cabinet Minister or Minister of State, while travelling, only on duty, by rail, may requisition a saloon/ Inspection Carriage to be attached to a regular train. In cases where it cannot be attached to Mail/Express trains and it is impossible for the Minister to travel by other trains, he may order a Special train at the expense of the Government.

Casul Labourers

2192. SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 3152 dated August 27, 1996 and state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a good number of casual labourers had been decasualised in North-east-Frontier Railway, but till date nothing has been done for their re-employment though assured by the Government from time to time.